TOMB OF DRACULA
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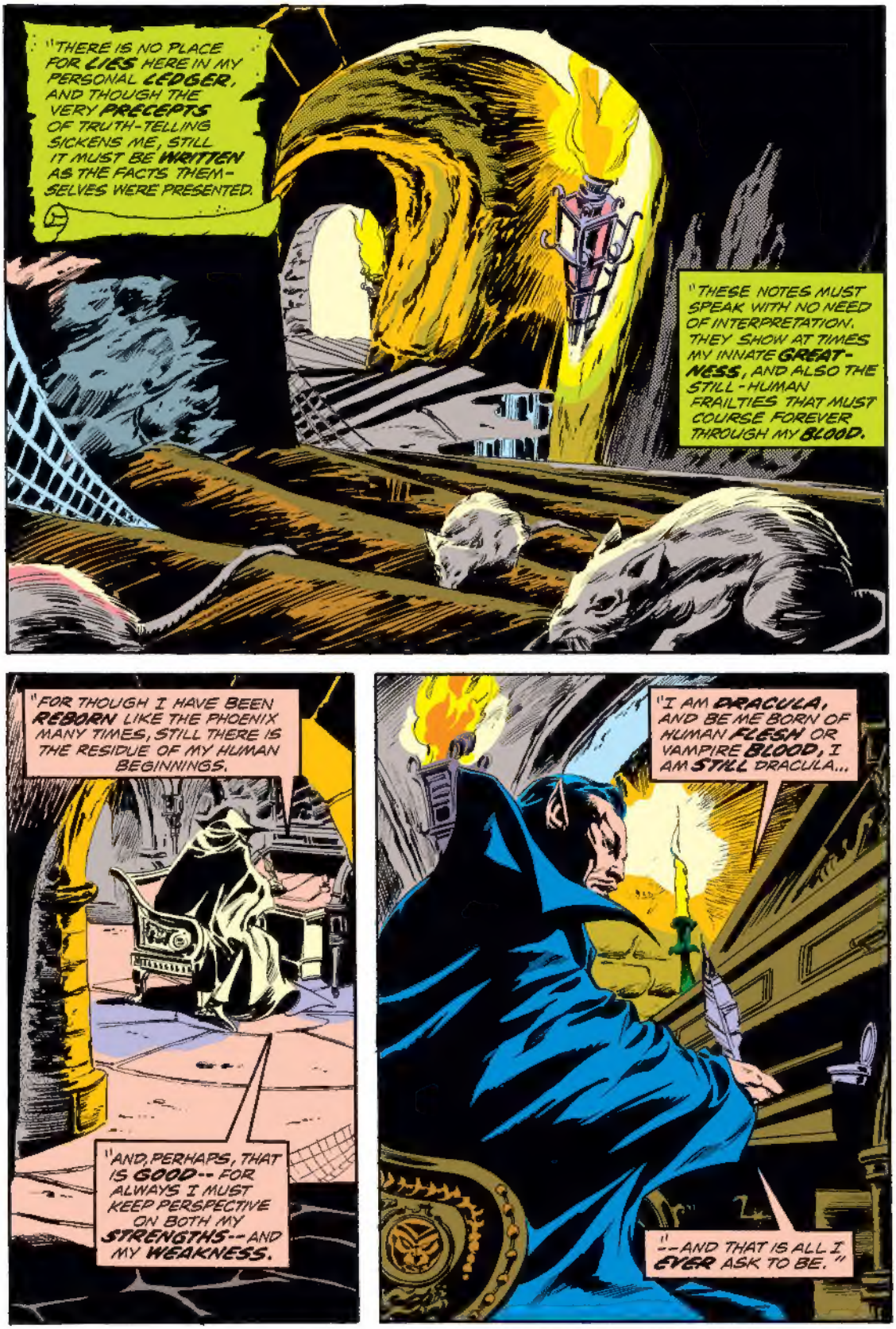
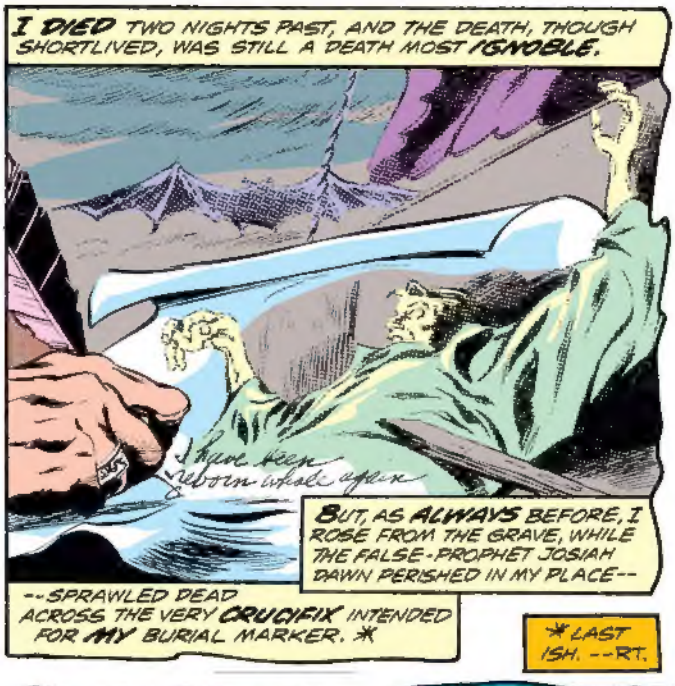
THE TOMB OF DRACULA™
BTAM!
I--I SHOT A BAT!
--BUT I KILLED--A VAMPIRE!
BUT--HOW LONG WILL A VAMPIRE STAY DEAD?

Stan Lee PRESENTS: TOMB OF DRACULA!™

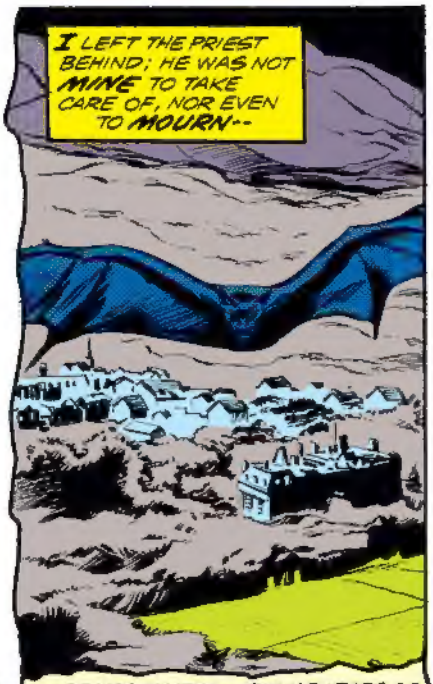
MARV WOLFMAN / SCRIPTER | GENE COLAN / PENCILER | TOM PALMER / INKER | JOHN COSTANZA / letterer | TOM PALMER / Colorist | ROY THOMAS / EDITOR

AUTUMN: THE SEASON FOR THINGS DECAYING...
...WHEN CRIMSON LEAVES TUMBLE WISTFULLY TO A ROCK-HARD EARTH, ONLY TO BE COVERED BY SOME IVORY WINTER'S SNOW.
AUTUMN: THE SEASON FOR THINGS DYING...
AUTUMN: A FEARFUL TIME OF YEAR--FOR THE LIVING AND UNDEAD ALIKE.
Fear IS THE NAME OF THE GAME!

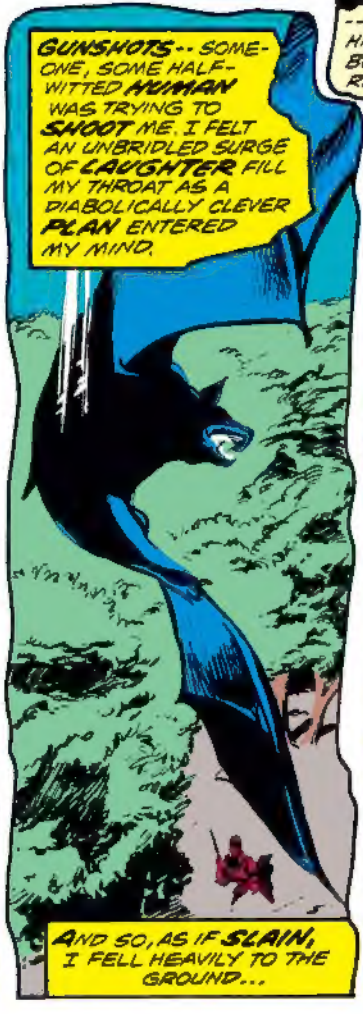

"THERE IS NO PLACE FOR LIES HERE IN MY PERSONAL LEDGER, AND THOUGH THE VERY PRECEPTS OF TRUTH-TELLING SICKENS ME, STILL IT MUST BE WRITTEN AS THE FACTS THEMSELVES WERE PRESENTED.
"THESE NOTES MUST SPEAK WITH NO NEED OF INTERPRETATION. THEY SHOW AT TIMES MY INNATE GREATNESS, AND ALSO THE STILL-HUMAN FRAILTIES THAT MUST COURSE FOREVER THROUGH MY BLOOD.
"FOR THOUGH I HAVE BEEN REBORN LIKE THE PHOENIX MANY TIMES, STILL THERE IS THE RESIDUE OF MY HUMAN BEGINNINGS.
"AND, PERHAPS, THAT IS GOOD -- FOR ALWAYS I MUST KEEP PERSPECTIVE ON BOTH MY STRENGTHS -- AND MY WEAKNESS.
"I AM DRACULA, AND BE ME BORN OF HUMAN FLESH OR VAMPIRE BLOOD, I AM STILL DRACULA...
"--AND THAT IS ALL I EVER ASK TO BE."


I DIED TWO NIGHTS PAST, AND THE DEATH, THOUGH SHORTLIVED, WAS STILL A DEATH MOST IGNOBLE.
BUT, AS ALWAYS BEFORE, I ROSE FROM THE GRAVE, WHILE THE FALSE-PROPHET JOSIAH DAWN PERISHED IN MY PLACE--
--SPRAWLED DEAD ACROSS THE VERY CRUCIFIX INTENDED FOR MY BURIAL MARKER. *

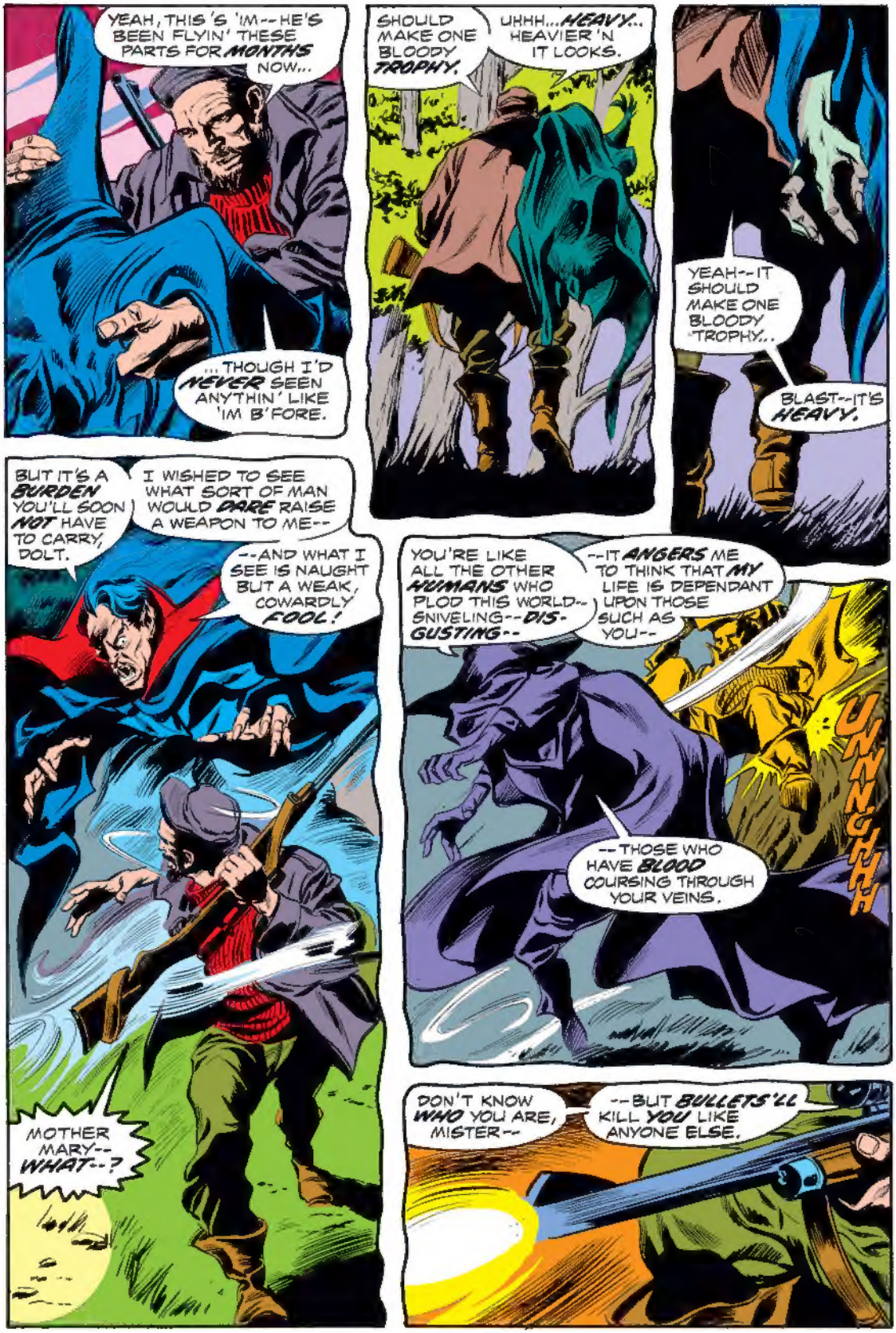
* LAST ISH. --RT.


I LEFT THE PRIEST BEHIND; HE WAS NOT MINE TO TAKE CARE OF, NOR EVEN TO MOURN--
--LET THE OTHERS--THE MEMBERS OF HIS CONGREGATION GIVE HIM HIS BURIAL, AND PRAY THAT HE NEVER RISES FROM HIS UNTIMELY TOMB.

FOR ME, I WAS THIRSTING, BUT STILL ABLE TO FEEL THE EXHILARATION OF FLIGHT; THE CRUSH OF CHILLED WIND AS IT RUSHED PAST MY LEATHERY WINGS.
BAM
ONLY THOSE WHO KNOW THE ECSTACY OF VAMPIRISM, THE SERENITY OF BEING AN UNDEAD, COULD GRASP MY FEELINGS AT THAT MOMENT...
...AND NOT EVEN THE PREYING EYES OF HIDDEN ASSASSINS COULD STILL THAT JOYOUS CHORD.

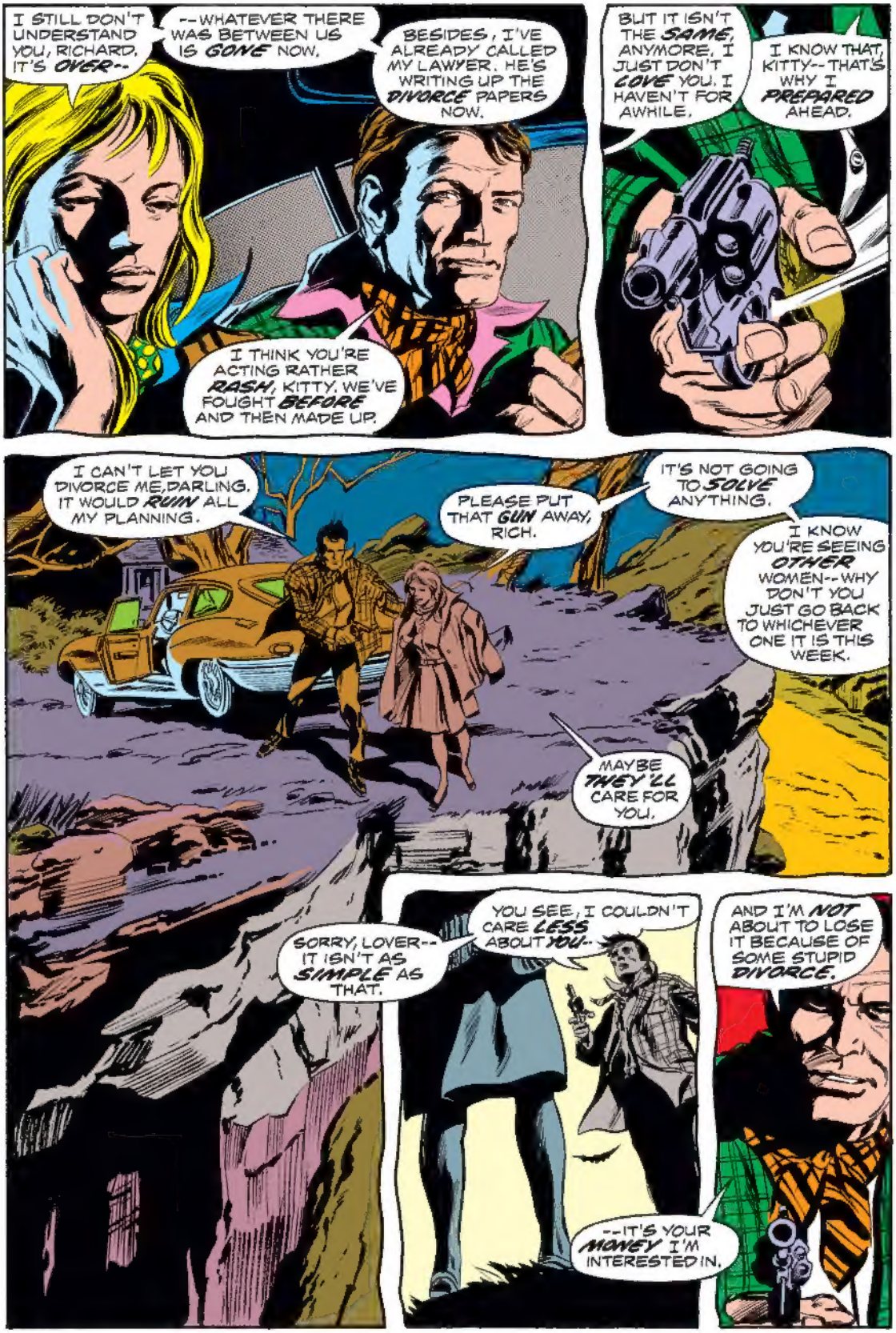

GUNSHOTS -- SOMEONE, SOME HALF-WITTED HUMAN WAS TRYING TO SHOOT ME. I FELT AN UNBRIDLED SURGE OF LAUGHTER FILL MY THROAT AS A DIABOLICALLY CLEVER PLAN ENTERED MY MIND.
AND SO, AS IF SLAIN, I FELL HEAVILY TO THE GROUND...

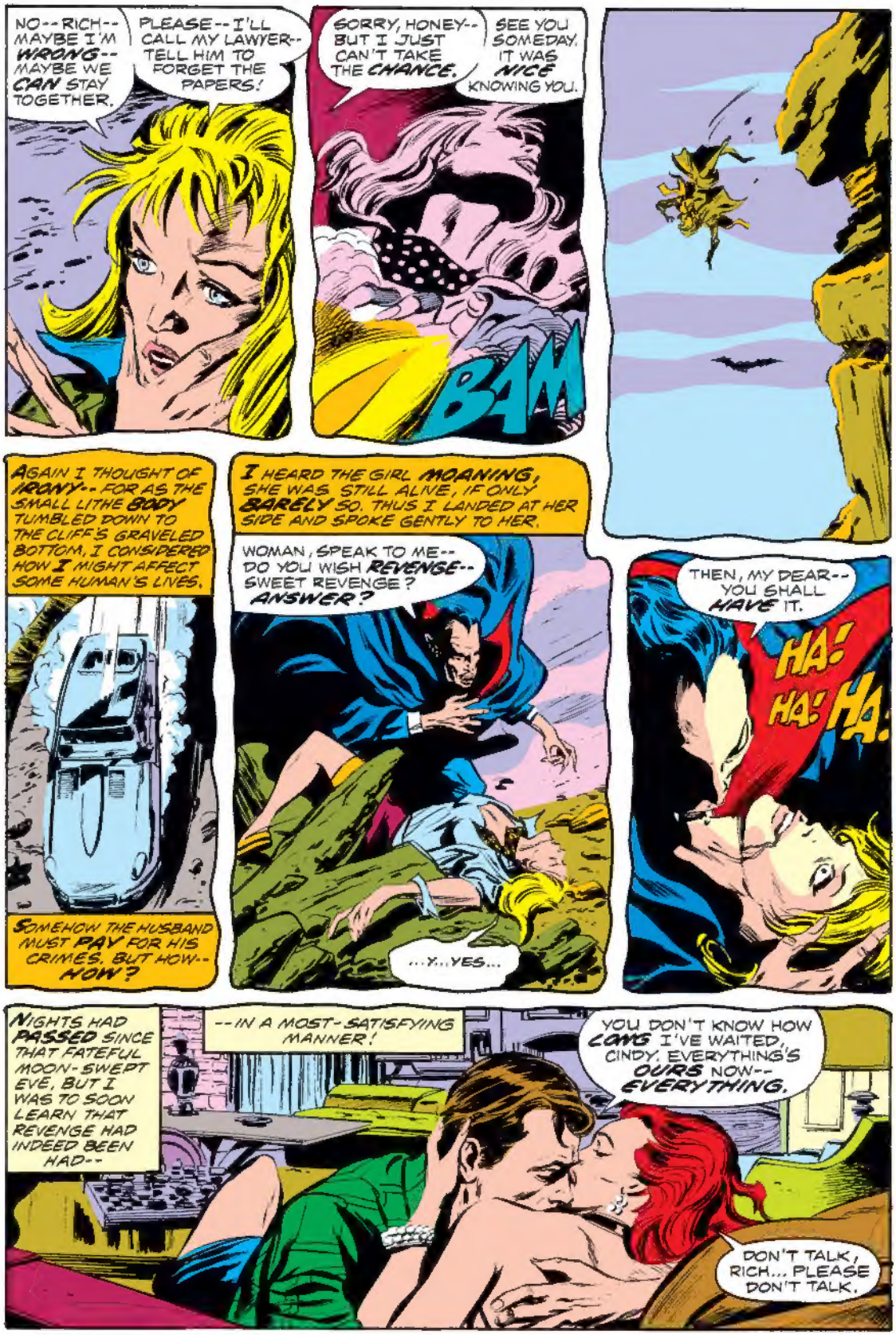
...WHERE THE UNSUSPECTING HUNTER MOVED WARILY CLOSE TO ME.
HA! KNEW I'D GET THAT BLASTED BAT SOMEDAY--
CHALK UP ANOTHER HIT, VINNIE, OLE BOY.

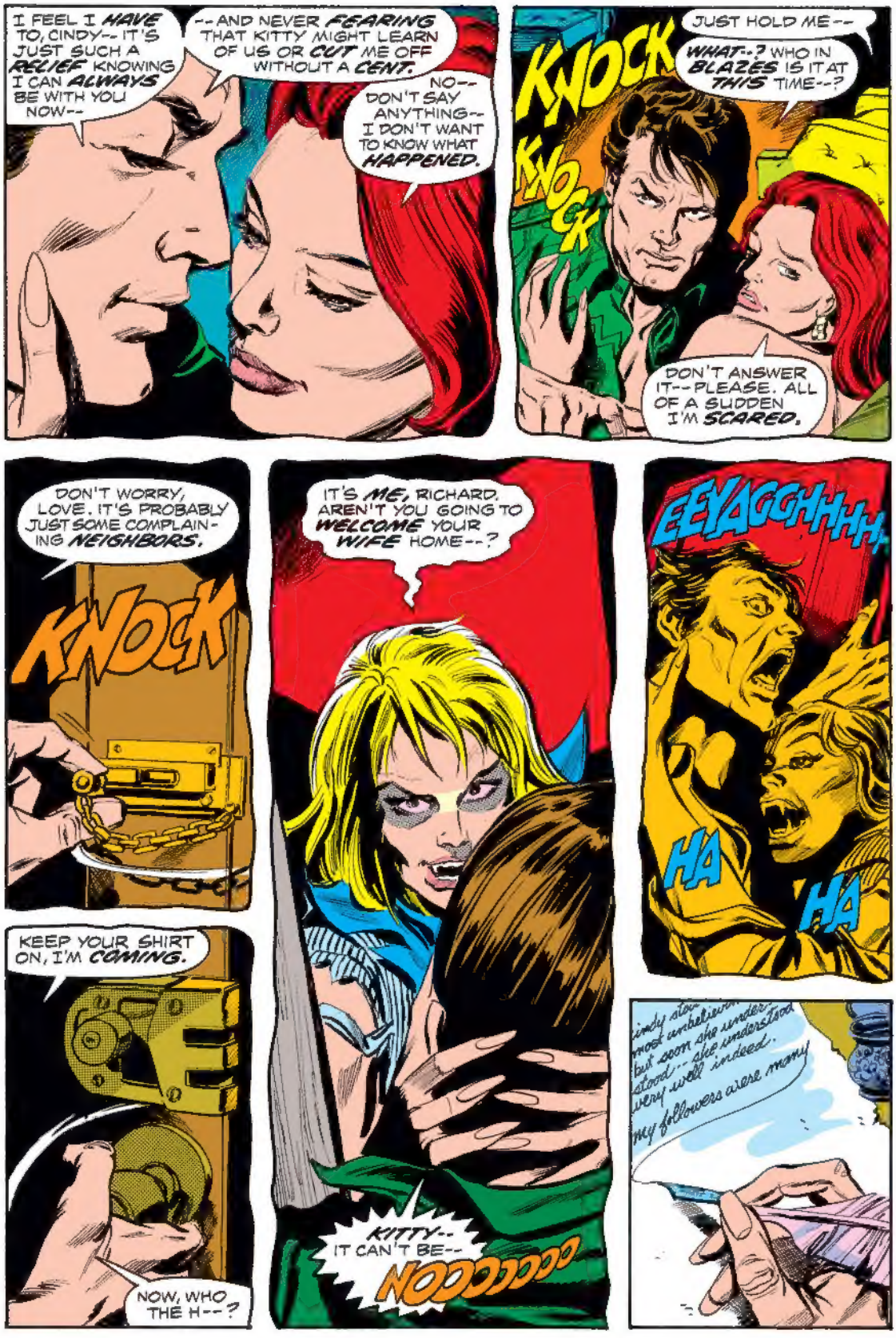

YEAH, THIS 'S 'IM--HE'S BEEN FLYIN' THESE PARTS FOR MONTHS NOW...
...THOUGH I'D NEVER SEEN ANYTHIN' LIKE 'IM B'FORE.
SHOULD MAKE ONE BLOODY TROPHY.
UHHH...HEAVY... HEAVIER 'N IT LOOKS.
YEAH--IT SHOULD MAKE ONE BLOODY TROPHY..
BLAST--IT'S HEAVY.
BUT IT'S A BURDEN YOU'LL SOON NOT HAVE TO CARRY, DOLT.
I WISHED TO SEE WHAT SORT OF MAN WOULD DARE RAISE A WEAPON TO ME--
--AND WHAT I SEE IS NAUGHT BUT A WEAK, COWARDLY FOOL!
MOTHER MARY--WHAT--?
YOU'RE LIKE ALL THE OTHER HUMANS WHO PLOD THIS WORLD--SNIVELING--DISGUSTING--
--IT ANGERS ME TO THINK THAT MY LIFE IS DEPENDANT UPON THOSE SUCH AS YOU--
UNNGHHH
--THOSE WHO HAVE BLOOD COURSING THROUGH YOUR VEINS.
DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, MISTER--
--BUT BULLETS'LL KILL YOU LIKE ANYONE ELSE.

STOP-- YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO-- TO DIE!
HA! HA! HA! I'M ALREADY DEAD, MORTAL-- HOW DID YOU EXPECT TO KILL ME AGAIN--?
-- CERTAINLY NOT WITH THIS PUNY WEAPON OF YOURS.
W-WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO--?
SILENCE, HUMAN-- I COULD SLAY YOU WHERE YOU STAND.. BUT NO--
--THERE IS A BETTER WAY--
--ONE FAR MORE FITTING FOR ONE SUCH AS YOU.
YOU HAD BETTER FLEE, MORTAL-- YOUR LIFE IS NOW DEPENDANT ON YOUR CUNNING AND SPEED.
WHAT DID HE MEAN BY-- EH--?
NOISES--? GOOD LORD-- RATS-- HE SUMMONED RATS...
...TO CHASE ME.
BUT I KNOW EVERY INCH'A THIS FOREST... IF I CAN'T ESCAPE 'EM-- NO ONE CAN.
AN' IT LOOKS LIKE I HAVE-- AIN'T NONE 'ROUND--

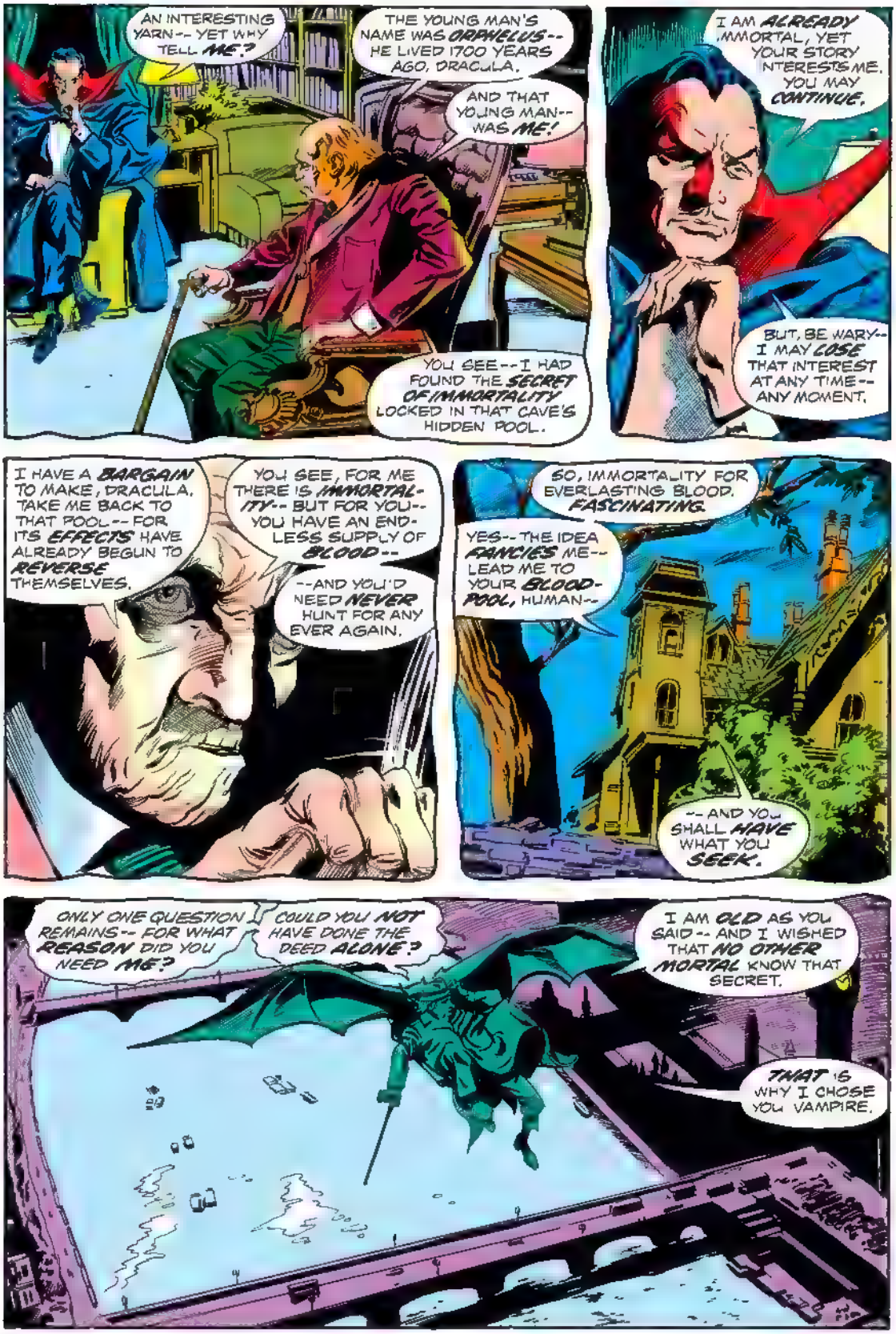
YEAH--I LOST 'EM BACK IN THE THICKET--
HUH--MORE SOUNDS--GROWLING--NOT RATS--
GRRRR
--OH GOD, NO!! WOLVES!
NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO
GRRRRRRR
WHILE THE FOOL FLED MY RATS, HE HAD NEVER SUSPECTED I COULD ALSO CONTROL THE WILD WOLVES...
THUS HUNTER-BECAME HUNTED, AND DIED AS HORRIBLY AS HE HAD LIVED.
AN IRONY--PERHAPS JUST ONE IN A SERIES OF MANY OTHERS IN MY LIFE.
SUCH AS THE IRONY OF MY BIRTH--SLAIN AS I WAS ON A TRANSYLVANIAN BATTLEFIELD BY LORD TURAC, I WAS TURNED OVER TO A GYPSY WITCH--
--ONE WHO TURNED OUT TO BE A VAMPIRE HERSELF, THEN TURAC MURDERED MARIA, MY DARLING WIFE--
--THAT DAMNED TURK NEVER KNEW THAT IF IT WERE NOT FOR HIS PROWESS I WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN REBORN--
--AND THAT HE WOULDN'T HAVE EVER DIED.*
*DRACULA LIVES #2. --RT.
MARIA--STILL AFTER 500 YEARS I MOURN FOR HER, FOR THOUGH OTHERS CALLED ME THE DEVIL AND THE IMPALER, SHE CALLED ME HER LOVE, AS I DID HER.
THERE WERE BONDS BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE THEN--BONDS WHICH MEANT MORE THAN THE PAPERS ONE SIGNED AT WEDDING.
AND IT SEEMS THAT THIS MODERN ERA SUFFERS MUCH--FOR MARRIAGE HAS NOT THE SANCTITY IT HAD IN MY DAY.

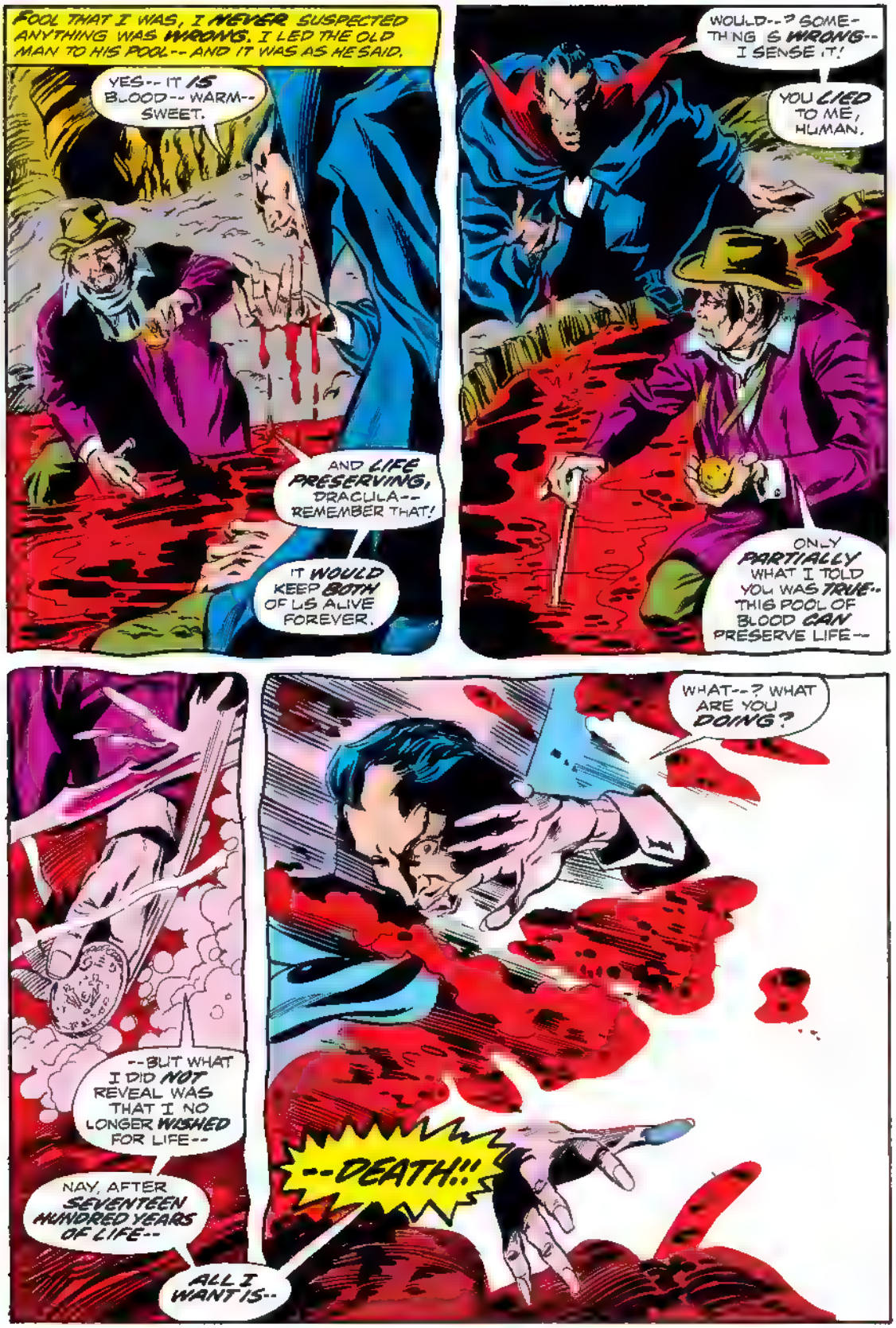

I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU, RICHARD. IT'S OVER--
--WHATEVER THERE WAS BETWEEN US IS GONE NOW.
BESIDES, I'VE ALREADY CALLED MY LAWYER. HE'S WRITING UP THE DIVORCE PAPERS NOW.
I THINK YOU'RE ACTING RATHER RASH, KITTY. WE'VE FOUGHT BEFORE AND THEN MADE UP.
BUT IT ISN'T THE SAME, ANYMORE. I JUST DON'T LOVE YOU. I HAVEN'T FOR AWHILE.
I KNOW THAT, KITTY--THAT'S WHY I PREPARED AHEAD.
I CAN'T LET YOU DIVORCE ME, DARLING. IT WOULD RUIN ALL MY PLANNING.
PLEASE PUT THAT GUN AWAY, RICH.
IT'S NOT GOING TO SOLVE ANYTHING.
I KNOW YOU'RE SEEING OTHER WOMEN--WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO BACK TO WHICHEVER ONE IT IS THIS WEEK.
MAYBE THEY'LL CARE FOR YOU.
SORRY, LOVER-- IT ISN'T AS SIMPLE AS THAT.
YOU SEE, I COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT YOU--
--IT'S YOUR MONEY I'M INTERESTED IN.
AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO LOSE IT BECAUSE OF SOME STUPID DIVORCE.


NO--RICH--MAYBE I'M WRONG--MAYBE WE CAN STAY TOGETHER.
PLEASE--I'LL CALL MY LAWYER--TELL HIM TO FORGET THE PAPERS!
SORRY, HONEY--BUT I JUST CAN'T TAKE THE CHANCE.
SEE YOU SOMEDAY. IT WAS NICE KNOWING YOU.
BAM
AGAIN I THOUGHT OF IRONY--FOR AS THE SMALL LITHE BODY TUMBLED DOWN TO THE CLIFF'S GRAVELED BOTTOM, I CONSIDERED HOW I MIGHT AFFECT SOME HUMAN'S LIVES.
SOMEHOW THE HUSBAND MUST PAY FOR HIS CRIMES. BUT HOW--HOW?
I HEARD THE GIRL MOANING, SHE WAS STILL ALIVE, IF ONLY BARELY SO. THUS I LANDED AT HER SIDE AND SPOKE GENTLY TO HER.
WOMAN, SPEAK TO ME--DO YOU WISH REVENGE--SWEET REVENGE? ANSWER?
...Y...YES...
THEN, MY DEAR--YOU SHALL HAVE IT.
HA! HA! HA!
NIGHTS HAD PASSED SINCE THAT FATEFUL MOON-SWEPT EVE, BUT I WAS TO SOON LEARN THAT REVENGE HAD INDEED BEEN HAD--
--IN A MOST-SATISFYING MANNER!
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I'VE WAITED, CINDY. EVERYTHING'S OURS NOW--EVERYTHING.
DON'T TALK, RICH... PLEASE DON'T TALK.

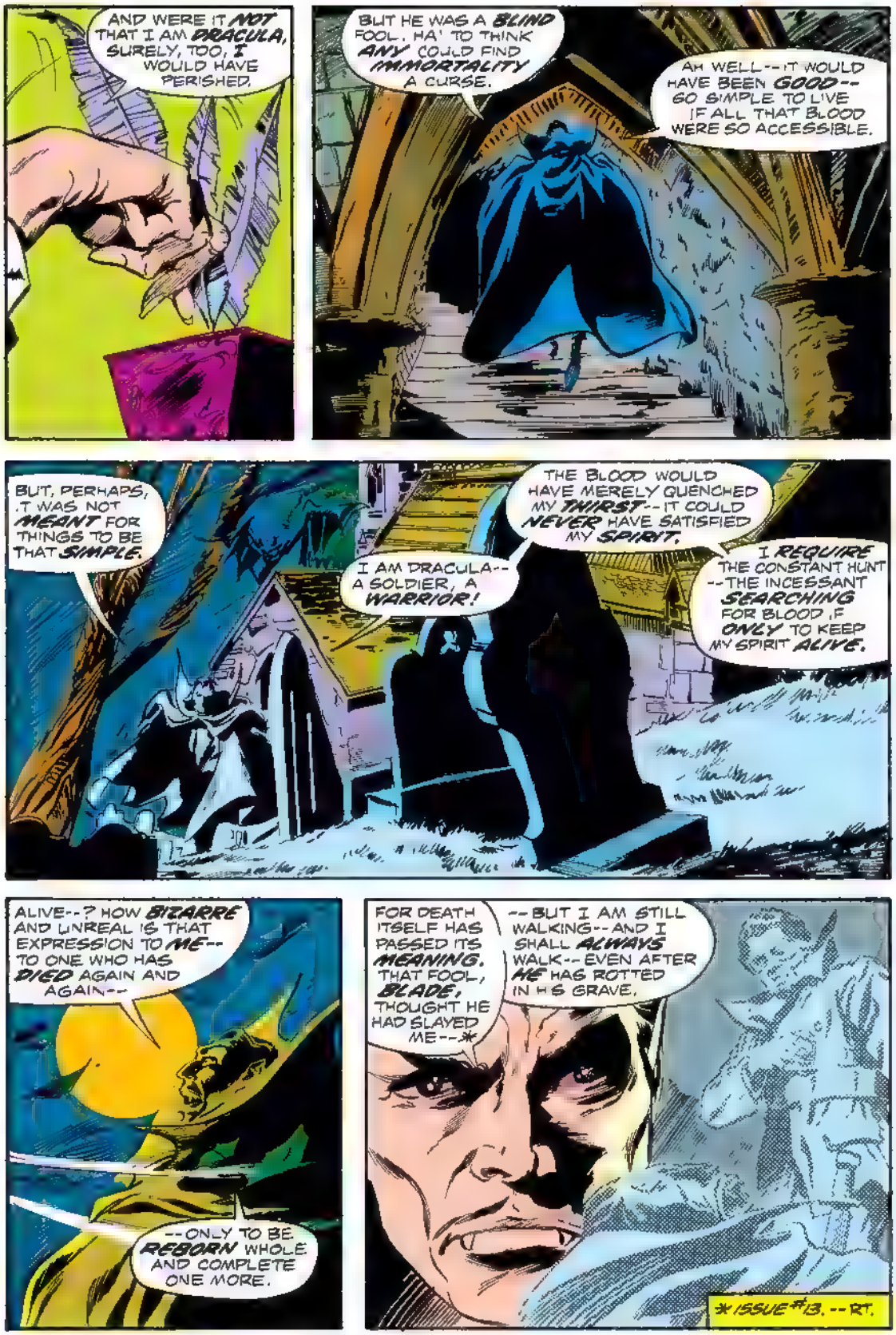

I FEEL I HAVE TO, CINDY-- IT'S JUST SUCH A RELIEF KNOWING I CAN ALWAYS BE WITH YOU NOW--
--AND NEVER FEARING THAT KITTY MIGHT LEARN OF US OR CUT ME OFF WITHOUT A CENT.
NO-- DON'T SAY ANYTHING-- I DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.
JUST HOLD ME--
KNOCK KNOCK
WHAT--? WHO IN BLAZES IS IT AT THIS TIME--?
DON'T ANSWER IT--PLEASE. ALL OF A SUDDEN I'M SCARED.
DON'T WORRY, LOVE. IT'S PROBABLY JUST SOME COMPLAINING NEIGHBORS.
KNOCK
IT'S ME, RICHARD. AREN'T YOU GOING TO WELCOME YOUR WIFE HOME--?
EEYAGGHHHHH
HA
HA
KEEP YOUR SHIRT ON, I'M COMING.
NOW, WHO THE H--?
KITTY-- IT CAN'T BE--
NOOOOOO
Cindy stared almost unbelieving but soon she understood-- she understood very well indeed. My followers were many

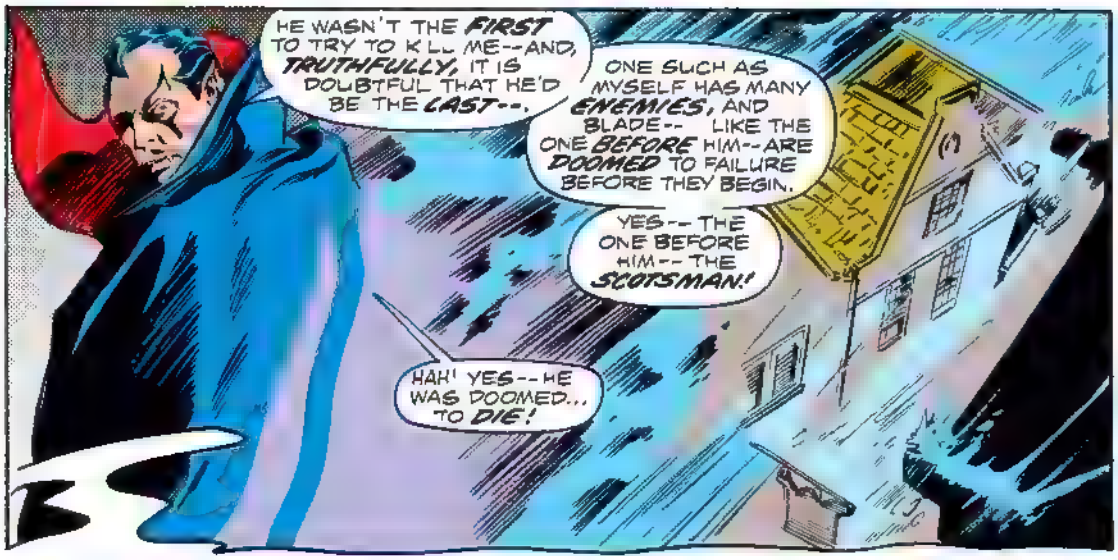
YES, IRONIES WITHIN IRONIES-- DECEPTIONS W TH N DECEPTIONS.
AND WHAT BETTER FORM OF DECEPTION THAN ONE WHICH BENEFITS ME?
BUT ENOUGH OF THAT-- FOR I HAVE BEEN VICTIM TO DECEIT, TOO--
DECE T WHICH STILL GNAWS AWAY AT ME...
. EACH TIME I EVEN THINK OF THAT OLD MAN-- AND THAT POOL. .
...THAT POOL OF BLOOD!
YOU SUMMONED ME, OLD MAN-- FOR WHAT PURPOSE?
ANSWER ME, QUICKLY, FOR DRACULA'S PATIENCE WITH ALL HUMANS WEARS THIN.
YOU CALLED ME "OLD MAN", VAMPIRE. AND YES-- I AM OLD-- PERHAPS OLDER THAN ANY MIGHT SUSPECT.
I HAVE WITNESSED MANY BIRTHS AND DEATHS DURING MY L FE, DRACULA--
--AYE, I EVEN WITNESSED YOURS!
WHAT--? ARE YOU MAD, MAN?
I THINK, SOMETIMES, I AM-- OR AT LEAST WAS THAT FATEFUL DAY.
AND THOUGH THERE IS MADNESS IN WHAT I SAY-- THE MADNESS IS NOT MINE.
GAZE AT THIS LOCKET, DRACULA --FORGED PERHAPS IN THE FIRES OF HELL ITSELF.
LOOK CLOSELY-- AND YOU W LL KNOW ALL.
"YOU WILL UNDERSTAND HOW MANY CENTURIES BEFORE, A YOUNG MAN, LOST FROM HIS TROOPS IN ANCIENT BRITAIN, FOUND A POOL.
"YOU WILL KNOW IT WAS NO ORDINARY WATER-FILLED HOLE--AND --IT WAS A POOL OF BLOOD--
--THE BLOOD OF ALL THOSE WHO HAD EVER DIED IN THE HISTORY OF THIS WORLD.

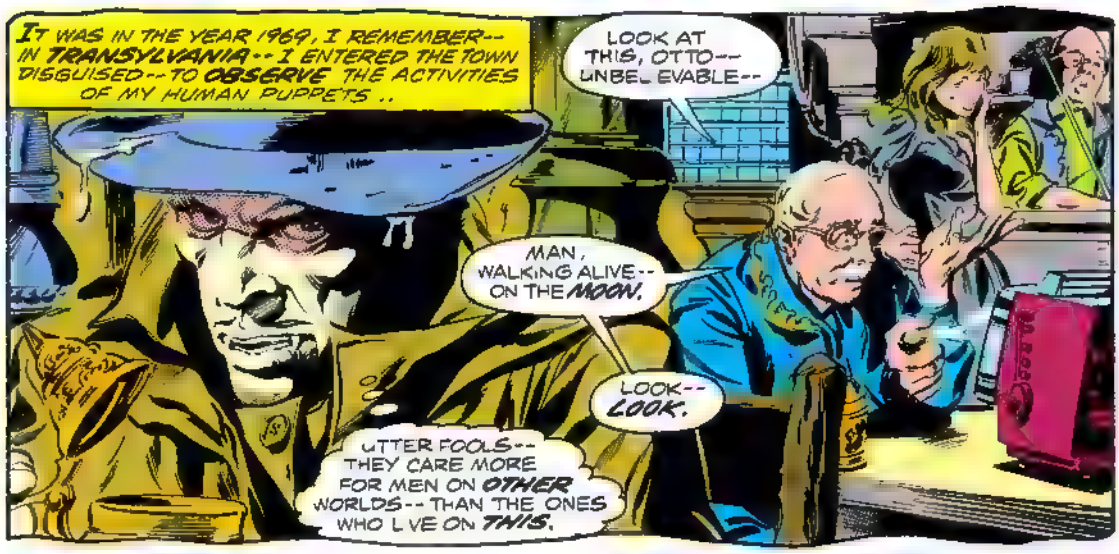

AN INTERESTING YARN-- YET WHY TELL ME?
THE YOUNG MAN'S NAME WAS ORPHELUS-- HE LIVED 1700 YEARS AGO, DRACULA.
AND THAT YOUNG MAN-- WAS ME!
YOU SEE--I HAD FOUND THE SECRET OF IMMORTALITY LOCKED IN THAT CAVE'S HIDDEN POOL.
I AM ALREADY IMMORTAL, YET YOUR STORY INTERESTS ME. YOU MAY CONTINUE.
BUT, BE WARY-- I MAY LOSE THAT INTEREST AT ANY TIME-- ANY MOMENT.
I HAVE A BARGAIN TO MAKE, DRACULA. TAKE ME BACK TO THAT POOL-- FOR ITS EFFECTS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO REVERSE THEMSELVES.
YOU SEE, FOR ME THERE IS IMMORTALITY-- BUT FOR YOU-- YOU HAVE AN END-LESS SUPPLY OF BLOOD--
--AND YOU'D NEED NEVER HUNT FOR ANY EVER AGAIN.
SO, IMMORTALITY FOR EVERLASTING BLOOD. FASCINATING.
YES-- THE IDEA FANCIES ME-- LEAD ME TO YOUR BLOOD-POOL, HUMAN--
-- AND YOU SHALL HAVE WHAT YOU SEEK.
ONLY ONE QUESTION REMAINS-- FOR WHAT REASON DID YOU NEED ME?
COULD YOU NOT HAVE DONE THE DEED ALONE?
I AM OLD AS YOU SAID-- AND I WISHED THAT NO OTHER MORTAL KNOW THAT SECRET.
THAT IS WHY I CHOSE YOU VAMPIRE.

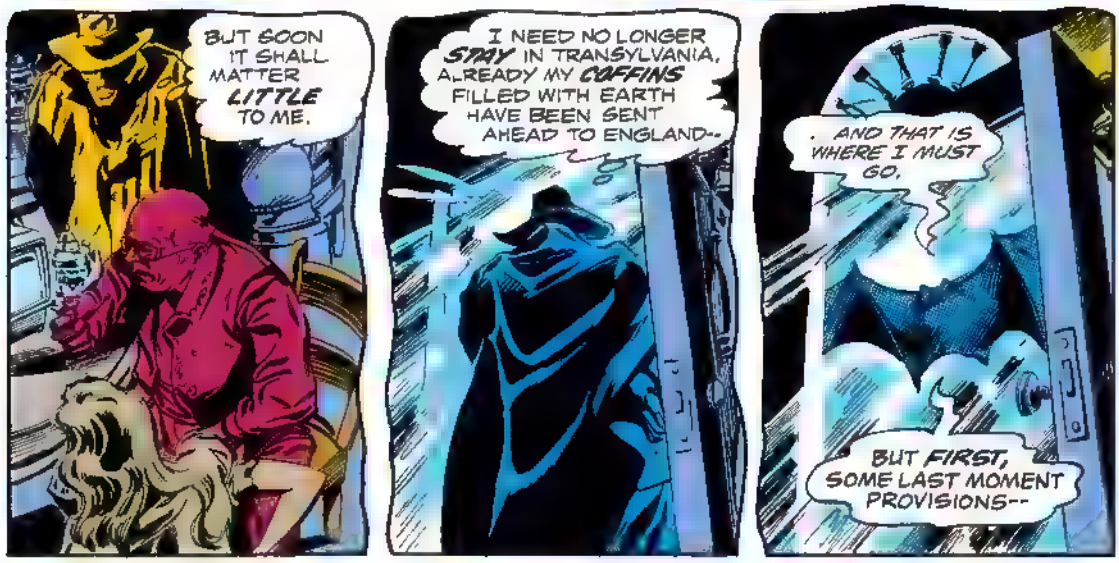

FOOL THAT I WAS, I NEVER SUSPECTED ANYTHING WAS WRONG. I LED THE OLD MAN TO HIS POOL-- AND IT WAS AS HE SAID.
YES-- IT IS BLOOD-- WARM-- SWEET.
AND LIFE PRESERVING, DRACULA-- REMEMBER THAT!
IT WOULD KEEP BOTH OF US ALIVE FOREVER.
WOULD--? SOMETHING IS WRONG-- I SENSE IT!
YOU LIED TO ME, HUMAN.
ONLY PARTIALLY WHAT I TOLD YOU WAS TRUE-- THIS POOL OF BLOOD CAN PRESERVE LIFE--
WHAT--? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
--DEATH!!
--BUT WHAT I DID NOT REVEAL WAS THAT I NO LONGER WISHED FOR LIFE--
NAY, AFTER SEVENTEEN HUNDRED YEARS OF LIFE--
ALL I WANT IS--

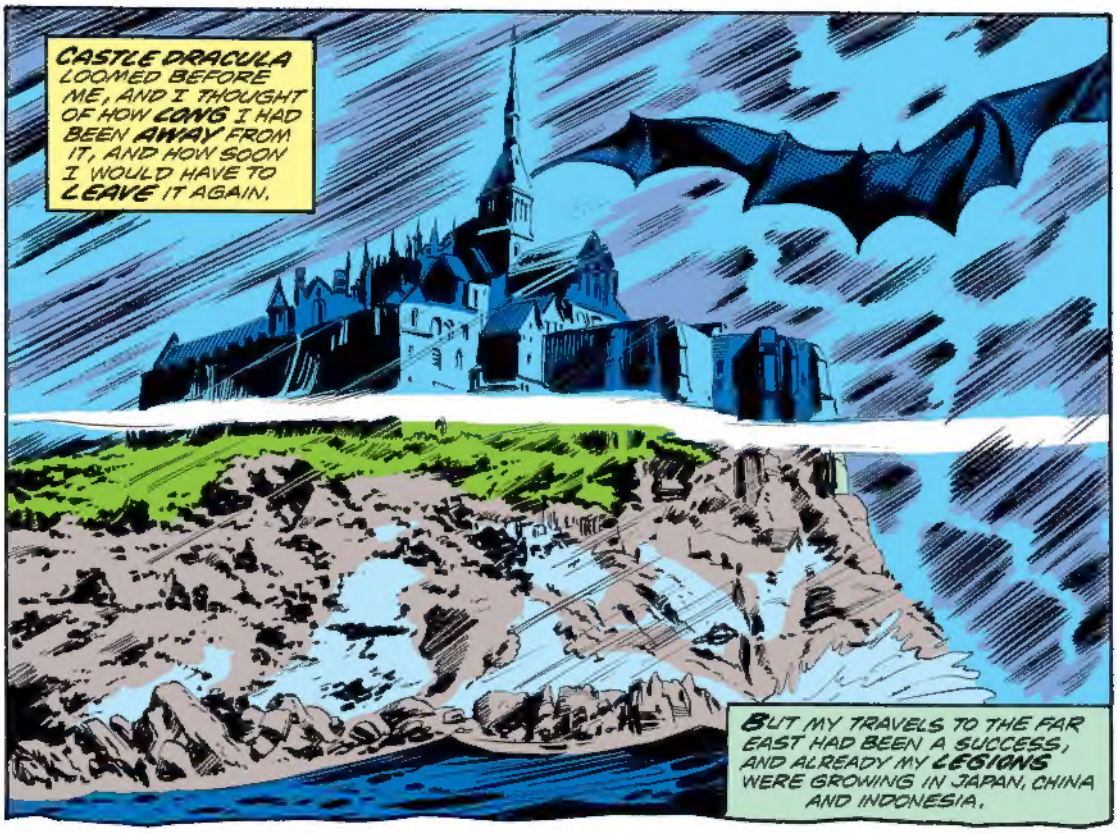
ENDING THIS BLASPHEMY OF MINE, VAMPIRE.
LIFE IS NOT A VIRTUE. TO LIVE AS LONG AS I HAVE-- IS A SIN.
I KNEW THAT NONE SHOULD EVER FALL VICTIM TO IMMORTALITY AGAIN, AND THUS, WHEN I SAW MYSELF AGING AFTER 17 CENTURIES-- I KNEW I MUST DESTROY THE BLOOD POOL BEFORE I D ED.
I NEEDED THE ANCIENT CASKET-- FOR IT HAD MORE THAN SIMPLY MYSTIC POWERS-- AYE-- IT COULD BURN THIS POOL BACK TO THE HELL FROM WHICH IT CAME.
FAREWELL, DRACULA-- I DIE NOW, AT LAST-- AT LONG LAST-- AND I THANK YOU FOR YOUR AID!
NO! YOU MUSTN'T-- YOU DON'T REALIZE TH--
YAAGHHHHHHHHH
THE BLOOD-POOL HEAVED AND VOMITED BOILING SCARLET DEATH, CONVULSED UPON ITSELF, AND BURST FULL BLOWN, WITH SAVAGE FURY...
I WAS THROWN IN A THOUSAND DIRECTIONS AT ONCE, AND THE AGONY I FELT AS THE SIZZLING BLOOD CANCED THROUGH ME WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE THAN ENOUGH TO KILL ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND HUMANS.

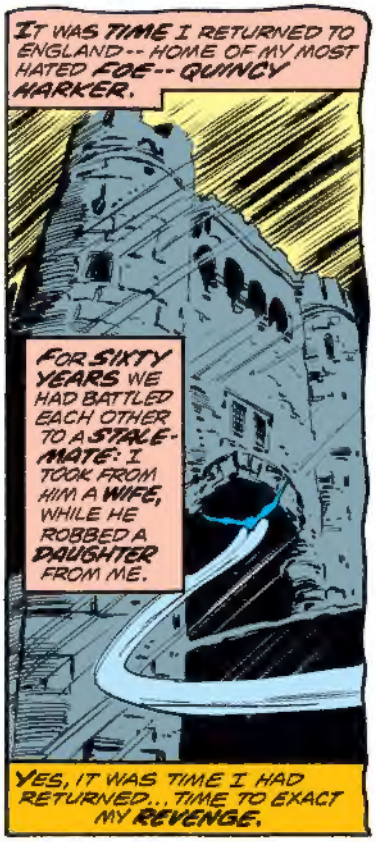

AND WERE IT NOT THAT I AM DRACULA, SURELY, TOO, I WOULD HAVE PERISHED.
BUT HE WAS A BLIND FOOL. HA' TO THINK ANY COULD FIND IMMORTALITY A CURSE.
AH WELL--IT WOULD HAVE BEEN GOOD--SO SIMPLE TO LIVE IF ALL THAT BLOOD WERE SO ACCESSIBLE.
BUT, PERHAPS, IT WAS NOT MEANT FOR THINGS TO BE THAT SIMPLE.
I AM DRACULA--A SOLDIER, A WARRIOR!
THE BLOOD WOULD HAVE MERELY QUENCHED MY THIRST--IT COULD NEVER HAVE SATISFIED MY SPIRIT.
I REQUIRE THE CONSTANT HUNT --THE INCESSANT SEARCHING FOR BLOOD, IF ONLY TO KEEP MY SPIRIT ALIVE.
ALIVE--? HOW BIZARRE AND UNREAL IS THAT EXPRESSION TO ME--TO ONE WHO HAS DIED AGAIN AND AGAIN--
--ONLY TO BE REBORN WHOLE AND COMPLETE ONE MORE.
FOR DEATH ITSELF HAS PASSED ITS MEANING. THAT FOOL, BLADE, THOUGHT HE HAD SLAYED ME--*
--BUT I AM STILL WALKING--AND I SHALL ALWAYS WALK--EVEN AFTER HE HAS ROTTED IN HIS GRAVE.
*ISSUE #13. --RT.


HE WASN'T THE FIRST TO TRY TO K LL ME--AND, TRUTHFULLY, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT HE'D BE THE LAST--.
ONE SUCH AS MYSELF HAS MANY ENEMIES, AND BLADE-- LIKE THE ONE BEFORE HIM--ARE DOOMED TO FAILURE BEFORE THEY BEGIN.
YES-- THE ONE BEFORE HIM-- THE SCOTSMAN!
HAH! YES-- HE WAS DOOMED... TO DIE!


IT WAS IN THE YEAR 1969, I REMEMBER-- IN TRANSYLVANIA-- I ENTERED THE TOWN DISGUISED-- TO OBSERVE THE ACTIVITIES OF MY HUMAN PUPPETS..
LOOK AT THIS, OTTO-- UNBEL EVABLE--
MAN, WALKING ALIVE-- ON THE MOON.
LOOK-- LOOK.
UTTER FOOLS-- THEY CARE MORE FOR MEN ON OTHER WORLDS-- THAN THE ONES WHO L VE ON THIS.


BUT SOON IT SHALL MATTER LITTLE TO ME.
I NEED NO LONGER STAY IN TRANSYLVANIA, ALREADY MY COFFINS FILLED WITH EARTH HAVE BEEN SENT AHEAD TO ENGLAND--
. AND THAT IS WHERE I MUST GO.
BUT FIRST, SOME LAST MOMENT PROVISIONS--


CASTLE DRACULA LOOMED BEFORE ME, AND I THOUGHT OF HOW LONG I HAD BEEN AWAY FROM IT, AND HOW SOON I WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE IT AGAIN.
BUT MY TRAVELS TO THE FAR EAST HAD BEEN A SUCCESS, AND ALREADY MY LEGIONS WERE GROWING IN JAPAN, CHINA AND INDONESIA.


IT WAS TIME I RETURNED TO ENGLAND -- HOME OF MY MOST HATED FOE -- QUINCY HARKER.
FOR SIXTY YEARS WE HAD BATTLED EACH OTHER TO A STALE-MATE: I TOOK FROM HIM A WIFE, WHILE HE ROBBED A DAUGHTER FROM ME.
YES, IT WAS TIME I HAD RETURNED... TIME TO EXACT MY REVENGE.

BUT MY REVENGE WAS GOING TO HAVE TO WAIT -- THREE YEARS -- FOR AS I ENTERED MY ANCESTRAL HOME --
WHO--?
I'D BE ADVISIN' YE TO HOLD YE PLACE, VAMPIRE -- 'AFORE I RUN YE THROUGH.
I WAN' SOME AWNSWERS TO A QUESTION -- NOW!
DO Y' UNNERSTAN' ME -- NOW!

MAH SON, DRACULA-- HE CAME CHASIN' YE IN CHINA SOME MONTHS AGO.
WHAT DID YE DO WI' HIM?
HE WAS A FOOL LIKE YOU, SCOTSMAN-- AND I LET HIM DIE AS HE DESERVED TO--
--AS YOU DESERVE TO-- AND SHALL!
THEN HE'D NOT BE A VAMPIRE, DRACULA?
NO-- HE DIED CLUTCHING A CRUCIFIX, SO I COULD NOT APPROACH HIM.
BUT YOU HAVE NO SUCH CURSED CROSS-- AND THEREFORE WILL SOON SERVE ME.
NEVER!
QUINCY HARKER SHOWED ME TH' WAYS OF BATTLIN' YE, VAMPIRE, AN' I SWEAR I'LL BE THE ONE WHO LIVES-- NOT YE.
HARKER--? I'M SICK OF THAT NAME!
THEN YOU'LL DIE WI' IT ON YE LIPS... 'CAUSE DIE YE SHALL!

WE FOUGHT, TUMBLING DOWN STAIRS, AND THROUGH ANCIENT CORRIDORS OF CASTLE DRACULA-- AND THOUGH I HAD BATTERED THE OLD MAN RELENTLESSLY, STILL HE BATTERED ON.

I KNEW THAT VICTORY WAS MINE-- FOR EVEN THE STARS THEMSELVES SCREAMED FOR HIS DEATH, BUT HE WOULD NOT GIVE IN-- RATHER, AS THE FRAY CONTINUED, HE SEEMED TO GROW WILDER AND WILDER!

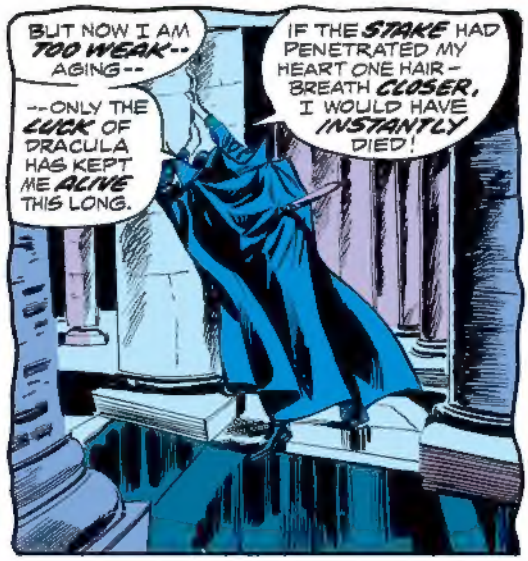
UNTIL, BY CHANCE ALONE, HE PLUNGED THE STAKE THROUGH MY HEART!
AND, FOR A VERY LONG MOMENT, THE SHOCK FROZE US BOTH IN OUR PLACES.

NO-- THIS IS NOT THE WAY IT WAS MEANT TO BE--
YE CANNA HAVE IT ALL-- AY HAD TO WIN-- FOR ERIC, MY SON!
YOU WERE TO DIE-- TO FALL BENEATH MY HAND!

YOU DEFEATED ME, HUMAN-- BUT NOT BEFORE I DESTROY YOU AS WELL--
-- FOR EVEN AS I DETERIOR-ATE, I AM STILL MORE THAN YOUR EQUAL--

--MORE THAN ENOUGH TO HURL YOU TO YOUR DEATH...

...IN THE PIT OF DEATH-- WHERE ALL MY ENEMIES PERISH.*
*LAST SEEN IN DRAC #1, PAGE 15, --REMEMBERING ROY.


BUT NOW I AM TOO WEAK-- AGING--
--ONLY THE LUCK OF DRACULA HAS KEPT ME ALIVE THIS LONG.
IF THE STAKE HAD PENETRATED MY HEART ONE HAIR-- BREATH CLOSER, I WOULD HAVE INSTANTLY DIED!

...AND DIE I SHALL-- BUT NOT HERE-- IT MUSTN'T BE HERE.

NO--IT MUST BE IN MY COFFIN-- RESTING IN THE SACRED SOIL OF TRANSYLVANIA...
...ONLY THERE MAY I DIE IN PEACE--
--AND WAIT FOR THE DAY THAT--
--DRACULA MAY LIVE AGAIN!
MY FLESH CRUMBLED AND WITHERED, TURNING TO THE EARTH AND ASHES FROM WHENCE IT HAD COME...
...AND FOR THREE LONG YEARS I RESTED THERE...
YES, UNTIL THE DAY WHEN THAT CLODDISH FOOL CLIFTON GRAVES TORE THE STAKE FROM MY HEART.
AND IT WAS THEN THAT I MADE MY VOW-- NEVER AGAIN WOULD I LET MYSELF DIE--
--NEVER AGAIN WOULD A COFFIN BE MY ETERNAL HOME... MY EVER-LASTING RESTING PLACE...
AND, UNTIL BLADE SLAYED ME, MY VOW WAS KEPT UNTOUCHED.
BUT THIS I VOW, ALL GODS THAT HEAR ME THIS NIGHT-- BE YOU SATAN OR SOME HEAVENLY FORCE--
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
--THOUGH I WALK IN THE SHADOWS OF HELL ITSELF--
--THOUGH I MAY DIE AGAIN AND AGAIN--
NOTHING SHALL KEEP ME FROM RISING FROM MY TOMB--
NOTHING! NOTHING! NOTHING!
NEXT: DEATH'S HAND!